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Self-Knowledge Skills of Educational Administrators (Kyrenia Example)

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Abstract

This research was prepared as a Master's thesis at the Administration, Inspection, Economy, and Planning of Education Main Branch of the Educational Sciences Institute at the Near East University with the aim of establishing the self-knowledge skills of educational administrators. Opinions related to what extend administrators know themselves were gathered from administrators working at Kyrenia District kindergartens and primary schools, using a questionnaire. Their perceptions of self-knowledge skills were examined through the dimensions of gender, place of work and professional experience, and it was attempted to establish whether there was a significant difference among them. The questionnaire is made up of two sections. The first section comprises personal information. The second section contains statements showing self-knowledge skills of administrators in open fields, special fields, blind fields, and individual fields. 48 statements are presented, related to these behaviors. The questionnaire was applied at 14 primary schools and 3 kindergartens in the Kyrenia District of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus and was administered to 14 headmasters, 14 assistant headmasters, and 1 teacher in charge; a total of 29 administrators. Frequency, percentage, arithmetical average, and Johari Window Assessment Form of the descriptive statistical methods for interpretation. It was established from the findings of this research that in the skills of self-knowledge of administrators gender factor did not make a significant difference, place of work did not make a significant difference, professional experience did not make a significant difference, and that 'Fields Known by Self' are greater than 'Fields Unknown by Self'.

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1. Introduction

The notion of administration and administrator, which existed in the most primitive communities that had administrator and administered people and institutions, reached the contemporary times undergoing many changes.

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Dating way back, administration was first approached scientifically with Taylor's book "Scientific Administration", published in 1911. The "Classical Administration" perception used until 1930, assumed people as selfish, lazy, and avoiding work, and tried to administer them accordingly. However, the concept of administration starting in the 1930s and gathering pace after the 1960s began to embrace human relationships. The concept of 'Total Quality Control', which started in Japan after World War II, accepted, and implemented in the USA after the 1980s, has begun to be applied in our country as well in recent years. According to this concept, 'No one is perfect but should seek perfection'. Therefore, it is important to know contemporary administration, embrace, and apply it. An administrator is a person who brings together tools of production, such as people, money, equipment, materials, machines etc. in order to materialize certain tools within a period of time and under changing environmental conditions (TC MEKB, 2001).

Educational administration is different from business and public administration in aim and function, and shows differences. While the goal in businesses is profit and customer satisfaction, in schools it is educating the youth that will create the future, and communal satisfaction. The essence of the goal of education requires a sincere and continuous solidarity and cooperation between education and other social institutions (Aydin, 1998).

According to the Teachers Law, in order to be a headmaster in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, one has to serve at least for two years as an assistant headmaster or be a regular primary school teacher for at least ten years, or serve for one whole year at the fourteenth level of the teachers' pay scale. To be appointed as an assistant headmaster one has to be a regular primary school teacher for at least seven years or serve for one whole year at the eleventh level of the teachers' pay scale. Teachers in charge, doing administrative work in some schools, carry out administrative work as well as being a teacher because there is no headmaster and/or assistant headmaster in that particular school (Teachers Law, 1985).

Three administrative styles are generally seen among administrative forms (Eren, 2001):

- a. Autocratic Administrator
- b. Democratic Administrator
- c. Administrator Providing Complete Freedom

The Autocratic Administrator keeps the employees completely out of the administration. He/she ignores the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of the employees and expects them to carry out the instructions of their superiors to the letter. The dominant motive in his/her administration is fear and the relationships with the subordinates are dogmatic.

The Democratic Administrator shares administrative authority with the employees in decision-making, planning, and implementation of the plan. He/she values the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of the employees. He/she is not punitive, and the dominant motive is willingness, purposefulness, proficiency, and success.

The Administrator Providing Complete Freedom does not often use the administrative authority. He/she lets the employees free to design their own goals, plans, and programs within the given facilities; they are completely autonomous.

An educational administrator, besides having the required training and possessing the knowledge and skills in the field, should also be a person with a will to develop, embracing the notion of life-long education, continuously learning, and sensitive to novel technical and social developments. The administrator should know him/herself well and should keep the power to develop his/her life, changes in life under control. He/she should have sufficient self-confidence to do that (TC Human Resources Management).

The Johari Window developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham and named after them can be of help for the administrator to get to know him/herself. Johari Window is made up of four boxes, and each box shows a different field (Başaran, 1998).

Open Field: Things related to the administrator, clearly perceived, and known by him/her and other personnel in the organization form this field of the window. This field is known by everyone since it is based on the behavior of the administrator.

Blind Field: This is the field known and perceived by everyone in the organization, except the administrator. This field is open to all, but closed to the administrator.

Special Field (Hidden): This field is open only to the administrator. The administrator keeps most of the personal information secret.

Unknown Field: This field is known by neither the administrator, nor the employees, because it is the subconscious of the administrator. It is very difficult for the administrator to know his/her side that is in this field, or for it to be known by others.

The administrator who does not know him/herself much or provides much information about him/herself to the people he/she works with, will obviously have a lot unknown aspects. Such an administrator is not aware of his/her strong and weak sides. Therefore, he/she cannot make long-term plans, since he/she does not know his/her successful, weak sides, and in what fields he/she needs support. Such an administrator is closed to development and has difficulty in communicating with his/her subordinates, as he/she does not have self-knowledge.

2. The aim and importance of the project

This study aims at establishing how much school administrators of the educational administrators in the TRNC know themselves.

The study is considered important in that the findings will contribute to the educational administrators knowing themselves better and achieving success, developing themselves, and evaluating their administrative roles better.

It is expected that the findings of this study will develop the outlook of experts in the field, and will be of help to new researches on this topic.

3. Liabilities and Limitations

In answering the questionnaires in this study, administrators reflected their genuine thoughts. The questionnaire used in the study is accepted as measuring the self-knowledge of administrators.

This study is limited;

- a. In terms of content, with how administrators see themselves, and comparing the variables of gender, years of service, and place of work affecting the concentration of this observation,
- b. In terms of methodology, with literature review,
- c. In terms of data resource, with the administrators, headmasters, assistant headmasters and responsible teachers working at primary schools, kindergartens, and private primary schools in the Kyrenia District of the TRNC,
- d. In terms of data obtained, with 2003-2004 Academic Year,
- e. In terms of data obtained, with the responses of administrators to the tool,
- f. In terms of level desired to be assessed, with the Johari Window Evaluation Form Scale.

4. Universe and Sampling

The universe of the study is made up of the headmasters, assistant headmasters, and responsible teachers serving as administrators in the TRNC Kyrenia District schools during the 2003-2004 academic year. There are 14 primary schools and 3 kindergartens in the Kyrenia District. Total number of administrators is 29.

Full sampling is used, as it was suitable with the content of the study.

5. Methodology and Applications

As a result of this study, related documents were examined, thesis, articles, bulletins, books, and other scientific publications were reviewed, and internet sources were reached.

A 'Survey Form' was used to reach goals. Application of the survey was executed by the author with permission from the Ministry of National Education. After the survey forms were duplicated, they were distributed to the educational administrators at schools, taking place in the full sampling, and the fully completed survey forms were collected by the author.

Surveys, completed and returned by the study groups, were examined and put down on data tables; analysis of obtained data was carried out with the help of SPSS. Frequency, percentage, arithmetical average techniques of the

descriptive statistical methods were used, as well as Johari Window Evaluation Form in decoding and evaluation answers and data on the personal qualities of the participating groups.

6. Model of Study

The scanning model was mainly used in this study in order to obtain data. Scanning models are approaches aimed at describing a situation in the past, or still existing, as it is (Karasar, 2003). The important point here is to properly observe the situation and put down the results. Project researcher can either observe the object or person directly, or can make use of previous recordings (written documents and statistics, pictures, voice or visual recordings etc.), put together scattered data and his/her own observations systematically and interpret them (Karasar, 2003).

7. Result and suggestions

From the results of the survey on knowing themselves, it was observed that male school administrators have a larger 'Open Field' compared to female school administrators, and female school administrators have a larger 'Unknown Field'. Female school administrators need to enlarge their 'Open Fields' and narrow their 'Unknown Fields'. They need to develop themselves and provided with trainings that will enable them to establish better communication.

Regarding the place of work, school administrators working at centers have a smaller 'Open Fields' compared to administrators working in villages. Administrators working at centers need to be educated to enlarge their 'Open Fields'.

It was observed that 'Unknown Fields' of school administrators working in centers are smaller, compared to school administrators working in villages. School administrators working in villages should receive training in getting to know themselves better and to establish better communication, which will enable them to narrow their 'Unknown Fields'.

Regarding seniority, it was observed that school administrators with 15 years or more in the profession have the largest 'Open Fields' in comparison to others with less seniority. Those with less seniority need training to enlarge their 'Open Fields'.

School administrators with 11-15 years in service are observed to have the largest 'Unknown Field'. These school administrators should narrow this field.

It was observed that school administrators in the Kyrenia District have larger 'Open Fields' than 'Unknown Fields'. For the school administrators to develop themselves, get to know themselves better, and establish more successful communication, their 'Open Fields' should be enlarged and their 'Unknown Fields' narrowed. Therefore, in-service training courses should be implemented, in which school administrators will acquire behaviors towards getting to know themselves.

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